

swam ashore, before seeking the slight shelter afforded by the spot which came so near being its final resting place. These data are all attested by letters and other memoranda received by my assistant, Mr. Walter Deane, in May and June, 1905, from Dr. Jones, who appears to have had most of his information from Mr. Haines. There is a newspaper clipping, however, pasted in one of the letters and inscribed (evidently by Mr. Deane) "Boston Post, 1905," which reads as follows:—"Pelican found at Sandwich. Sandwich, May 17.—A strange sight was witnessed here on Friday, when a large pelican was found on the beach here by Mr. Kounze, who gave it to Eugene Haines. It measured 8 feet from tip to tip of its strong wings. Its bill was over 18 inches long, and the pouch underneath would hold two or three gallons. Whether it followed some other birds from its far-away home, or whether it was blown towards these shores in a hurricane, none can tell. Mr. Haines will have it mounted and placed on exhibition."

This brief note is, as far as I am able to learn, the only published record that has hitherto appeared of the bird to which it relates. It will be observed that the name of the man who found the Pelican was here printed "Kounze," not "Kuntz," as it is written by Dr. Jones; while it is necessary to point out further that the "Friday" immediately preceding May 17, 1905, fell, according to the calendar for that year, on May 12, instead of on the 13th, which Dr. Jones regards as the correct date. As he is careful to express doubt in one of his letters concerning the accuracy of his spelling of the name, that given by the Sandwich correspondent of the 'Post' is perhaps to be preferred; but with respect to the date, Dr. Jones is, without question, the better authority of the two. He has just written me (February 23, 1909): "I am sure you will make no mistake in accepting the data which I obtained at the time, in accordance with the request of Mr. Deane, for I certainly fixed the date then as accurately as possible. . . . and the evidence I obtained was from Mr. Haines to whom the bird was given by the finder." — WILLIAM BREWSTER, *Cambridge, Mass.*

The European Widgeon in Rhode Island.—Almost any large collection of birds is likely to yield occasional surprises in the way of rarities which have been previously misidentified or overlooked. An instance of this happened only a few weeks ago when I found in my series of American Widgeon a peculiarly colored specimen, labeled *Anas americana*, which I do not remember to have ever noticed before. My record books show that it was purchased, with a number of other birds, in 1896, from Mr. Edward Sturtevant of Newport, Rhode Island, and that one of my assistants catalogued and relabeled it with the others, possibly when I was absent from Cambridge. Its original label, still attached to the skin, reads as follows:—"♂ *Dafila acuta*, 22, Rhode Island, Middletown 20 Sep. 1889. Taken by Edward Sturtevant, Collection of Edward Sturtevant." My assistant wrote in the Catalogue, between quotation marks:—"This is the only one I ever saw in this locality (salt marshes between 2d and 3d Beaches)." I am unable to

trace this statement to its source but it must have originated with Mr. Sturtevant and it may have been taken from one of his letters, afterwards destroyed.

In Millais's admirable 'Natural History of the British Surface Feeding Ducks' I find a figure (No. 3, Plate XVII) of an "immature male" European Widgeon, "coming out of the eclipse plumage into winter dress, age 16 months." Males of this age and condition somewhat resemble the females, from which they may easily be distinguished, however, by the presence of conspicuous grayish mottling on the scapulars and by a large white patch on the wing. From fully adult males in corresponding dress they differ, according to Millais, only in having the white on the wing somewhat less pure and widespread. Judged by this test my Rhode Island specimen is evidently mature, for the white on its wings is immaculate and of nearly maximum extent. In respect to every other detail of color and marking the bird agrees almost perfectly with the representation of the European Widgeon to which I have just called attention. In his text relating to the American Widgeon (which has been taken a few times in Great Britain) Millais says (on page 57):—"The old male in eclipse plumage more closely resembles the female of his own species than our drake Wigeon—his flanks are very grey-brown, and not that rich, red-brown colour seen in our bird." The female, also, is described by him as differing from that of the European species in a similar way, having "not so much red-brown on the flanks and breast."

Although it is not always safe to rely largely on plates and descriptions, however accurate, when identifying obscurely characterized birds, the evidence just given is sufficient, in my opinion, to warrant a rather positive reference of the Widgeon taken by Mr. Sturtevant at Middletown, Rhode Island, to *Mareca penelope*, of which, indeed, it seems to be a nearly typical representative. It is, I believe, the first European Wigeon known to have been obtained in New England. The second (hitherto supposed to have been the first) was shot in Monponsett Pond near Halifax, Massachusetts, on October 20, 1899. When I referred to the latter in 'The Auk'¹ as a "fine old male in remarkably handsome plumage, I had not seen Millais's book which, indeed, was not published until the following year. On reëxamining this specimen in the light of his testimony, I find that I was not mistaken in regarding it as mature; for its wings closely resemble those of the Wigeon killed by Mr. Sturtevant although in most other respects it is very unlike his bird owing to the fact that it is in full winter plumage. It came into my possession not long after it was recorded in 'The Auk.' Soon after this I secured the remains of a third European Widgeon to which Dr. Townsend has alluded in the following words.² "There is in Mr. William Brewster's collection the head and one wing of an

¹ Auk, XVIII, No. 2, April 1901, p. 125.

² C. W. Townsend, Birds of Essex County, Massachusetts, Memoirs Nutt. Orn. Club, III, 1905, p. 129.

adult male of this species shot at Marblehead on December 29th, 1900." This statement is not quite correct for I have *both* wings of the Marblehead bird and they indicate plainly that it was not more than six or seven months old when killed, being essentially like those of a female Widgeon and wholly without the white patches which, according to Millais, are sometimes shown by the male soon after the close of his first winter and invariably assumed by him before the end of his second autumn; after which he never lacks them at any season,—even when masquerading, for a brief time in late summer, in the subdued garb so generally like that of his mate and so appropriately termed his "eclipse" plumage.—WILLIAM BREWSTER, *Cambridge, Mass.*

Snow Geese in Massachusetts.—The seaboard of eastern Massachusetts was once visited regularly by considerable numbers of Snow Geese, if we may credit the testimony of certain early Colonial writers. Thus Wood, referring to the region about Lynn and to a period extending from 1629 to 1633, says they came "in great flockes about Michelmas" and after remaining six weeks, fled "to the Southward, returning in March and staying six weeks more" before continuing their spring migration northward. Just when they discontinued this practise is not definitely known but it was probably abandoned long before the beginning of the Nineteenth Century. During the past fifty years or more they seem to have occurred only at infrequent intervals and, as a rule, singly, although Dr. Townsend reports¹ that as lately as November, 1903, Mr. W. H. Vivian "saw a flock of about fifty white birds resting on the beach at Ipswich" Massachusetts. "He thought at first they were gulls, but they got up and flew off honking and he saw that they were white geese."

In view of some of the facts just mentioned I was not less surprised than interested to learn that Mr. M. Abbott Frazar had seen a large flock of Snow Geese at Townsend, Massachusetts, on April 13, 1908. He has written me two letters concerning them, from which, with his kind permission, I now make the following extracts, changing or transposing a word or two here or there:—

"I heard the geese making a tremendous noise in the distance and soon caught sight of them about a mile away, coming towards me and flying in a compact bunch, not in V-shape. They were all calling and acting as if lost or badly scared. They passed directly over my head not seventy yards up. There were at least seventy-five and more likely one hundred in the flock, . . . and all were in full plumage. I looked them over carefully to make sure there were no Canadas in the lot and there was not a gray bird of any kind. I could not be in doubt about this for they had not passed my house over four hundred yards when they swung so that the light shone on them making them look like a snow bank in which a dark bird would

¹ C. W. Townsend, *Birds of Essex County, Massachusetts*, Mem. Nutt. Orn. Club, No. III, p. 147.